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# IMPACT UPDATE

Protecting, Preventing, Providing

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## Maryland State Police Celebrates Black History Month

It has been nearly 66 years since Captain Milton Taylor broke the color barrier and became the first Black trooper in Maryland State Police history.

That milestone was a turning point in the department and opened the door for future generations of Black troopers to build on the foundation laid by Captain Taylor.

From Jacqueline Ringgold and Maria Barnett becoming the first female Black troopers in 1975 to Ida Williams becoming the first Black female director in 1989

when she was hired to head the Central Records Division to Lt. Col. Ernest Leatherbury becoming the first African American Bureau Chief in 1995, the department has taken great steps to ensure it hires "Maryland's Finest," regardless of race, creed or color.

This month's IMPACT Update is dedicated to the contributions of those trailblazers while also telling the stories of many of today's Black troopers, who are blazing their own paths thanks to the dedication of Captain Taylor in 1957.



# IMPACT UPDATE

## A Lasting Legacy: The Story of Captain Milton Taylor, MSP's 1st Black Trooper

The year was 1957.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower was beginning his second term in the White House.

The Little Rock Nine integrated public schools in Arkansas.

“All Shook Up” by Elvis Presley was the No. 1 song.

It was also the year that Milton Taylor made history when he broke the color barrier by becoming the first Black trooper in Maryland State Police history. Taylor served the department with distinction for 25 years, before retiring as a captain in 1982.

His career and life laid the foundation for many of the African American troopers in the department today. While Captain Taylor died in 2016 at the age of 82, his legacy will live on for generations to follow.

While Captain Taylor joined the Maryland State Police at the height of the civil rights movement, that was not necessarily a factor in why he applied to be a trooper.

“When I applied to state police, I didn't think about the significance of this,” said Captain Taylor in a 1994 article in *The Baltimore Sun*. “All I knew is that they rode up and down the highway and it looked like an interesting job. But



I hope all this will encourage other people.”

After graduating from the Academy, Captain Taylor worked his way through the ranks of the Investigation Division from trooper first class to corporal and sergeant to detective sergeant in just over 12 years.

In 1973, then-Second Lieutenant Taylor, the first African American to reach commissioned status, was named chief of the Domestic Intelligence Unit. He remained there for nearly two years until his promotion to first lieutenant when he was named commander of the Criminal Investigation Section. Lieutenant Taylor was later transferred to Planning and Research, then to the Automotive Safety Enforcement Division.

Lieutenant Taylor was promoted to Captain in 1980 and placed on the Field Operations Bureau staff, making him the highest ranking African American state trooper

before his retirement after 25 years of service.

“This one man changed the face of the Maryland State Police, which would significantly impact future generations of African Americans aspiring to be state troopers,” said Lt. Col. (ret.) Stewart Russell in a 2016 Maryland State Police video that examined Captain Taylor’s legacy.”

In 1994, Captain Taylor, who was born in Elkridge, was honored with an exhibit in the Howard County Center of African American Culture in Columbia. The display included a vintage 1950s brown state police uniform, and the now iconic photo of a young then Trooper Taylor next to his Chevrolet outside state police headquarters in Pikesville.

“It makes you think about your own mortality,” Captain Taylor told *The Baltimore Sun* of the exhibit in 1994.



# IMPACT UPDATE



## Black History, Law Enforcement & MSP: A Timeline

1875

Bass Reeves is appointed as the first African American Deputy U.S. Marshal



1916

Georgia Ann Robinson is believed to be the first Black female police officer in the country when the Los Angeles Police Department hired her in 1919. She started as a volunteer before being hired full-time.



1941

William B. Lindsay becomes the first known African American state trooper. He was hired by the Illinois State Police.



1957

Milton Taylor becomes the first African American trooper hired by Maryland State Police.



1975

Trooper Jacqueline D. Ringgold and Trooper Maria Barnett become Maryland State Police's first Black female troopers.



1989

Ms. Ida J. Williams named Director of the Central Records Division. She was the first female African American Director for MSP.



1995

Lt. Col. Ernest Leatherbury Sr. became Maryland State Police's first Black Bureau Chief when he was named the head of the Field Operations Bureau.



2001

Retired Major Anita L. Allen became the first African American female barrack commander and commissioned officer. She retired as the Assistant Chief of the Support Services Bureau in charge of Logistics Command





# IMPACT UPDATE

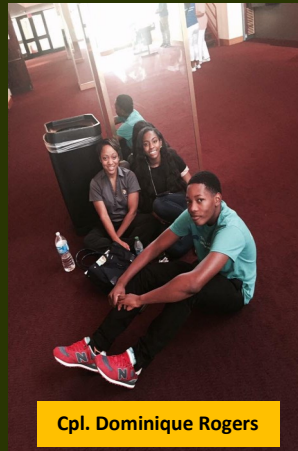
## Forestville Barrack Troopers Honor Memory Of TFC Brown Through Neighborhood Outreach

Trooper First Class Wesley Brown viewed his job with the Maryland State Police as a way to give back to the Prince George's County community that he served.

TFC Brown began a program within the Seat Pleasant Community called Young Men Enlightening Younger Men. This program was geared toward mentoring and inspiring young men within the community.

TFC Brown's mentorship impacted so many and left a remarkable impact on not only the Seat Pleasant community, but also Prince George's County overall.

Unfortunately, he never had the opportunity to see his vision become a full reality as he was fatally shot in 2010 while working off-duty

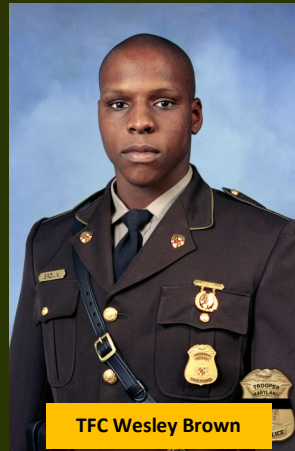


Cpl. Dominique Rogers

security at a restaurant.

Cpl. Dominique Rogers and Cpl. Dionta Douglas did not want that vision to die with TFC Brown. They both had the opportunity after graduating the Academy to build a relationship with TFC Brown and were inspired to follow in his footsteps and impact the community they served.

It was those relationships and that motivation which led them to establish the Maryland State Police Wesley Brown Explorer Program



TFC Wesley Brown

not long after his death.

"We wanted to continue his mission of focusing on youth in our community and help provide youth with a positive image of law enforcement," said Cpl. Rogers, who is currently assigned to the Forestville Barrack.

In the years that followed, the Explorer Program held Back to School supply drives, developed mentoring opportunities for those 13-21 years old and took them on trips around Maryland, including to

the Eastern Shore.

Cpl. Rogers said while none of their participants transitioned to becoming an MSP cadet or trooper, many did go on to join the military and/or attend college.

The Explorer Program went inactive around the time of the pandemic. However, Cpl. Rogers said she and others at the Forestville Barrack are continuing to honor TFC Brown's legacy through community service and outreach projects that reach a wider segment of the population.

"Building positive relationships between law enforcement and the community is a challenge across the country...", Cpl. Rogers said. "We want to work to continue to improve those relationships moving forward."





# IMPACT UPDATE

## From Terp to Trooper: D/Sgt. Jefferson Gives Up NFL Shot To Pursue MSP Dream

Detective Sergeant Wesley Jefferson was a highly recruited football player out of Brandywine High School in Prince George's County.

He eventually chose to stay close to home and joined the University of Maryland to play linebacker in 2003. D/Sgt. Jefferson had a successful college football career, and was second on the team with 110 tackles as a junior in 2006.

D/Sgt. Jefferson graduated the University of Maryland in 3 1/2 years, but still had a year of playing eligibility remaining. Given his performance on the field, D/Sgt. Jefferson could have played in 2007 and could have positioned himself to get drafted into the NFL.

Instead, he informed then-Coach Ralph Friedgen that he would forgo his final year of eligibility and enter the Maryland State Police Academy.

"Could I have gone to the NFL and made millions of dollars? Maybe," he said. "But at the end of the day, you need to do what makes you happy. Becoming a Maryland state trooper has absolutely made me happy and my family happy."



D/Sgt. Wesley Jefferson was a linebacker at Maryland before entering the MSP Academy.

D/Sgt. Jefferson, who is assigned to CED Central South, said he entered college knowing he wanted to work in law enforcement, but it was his interaction with several state troopers who provided security during Maryland's football season that put him on his ultimate career path.

He said there are many similarities between playing college football and working in law enforcement, and that his experience on the gridiron prepared him for life with MSP.

"Playing on a football team, you are a part of something that's bigger than yourself," D/Sgt. Jefferson said. "You learn to be selfless because there's many things you have to give up to be part of any team, but especially on

a football team...

"That translates to being a Maryland state trooper because there are times when you have to be selfless... Ultimately, at the end of the day, these things become very rewarding because I have the opportunity to be a part of something much, much larger than myself and to truly affect a lot of people in a positive way."

D/Sgt. Jefferson said he looks back with no regrets.

"I understood that football doesn't last forever," he said. "After I completed my degree requirements, I still had a year of eligibility left, but I knew I wanted to be a state trooper. Even after 15 years, I know with great certainty that that was the best decision I could have made in my life."



# IMPACT UPDATE

## Continued Community Engagement Key To Improving Law Enforcement Recruiting Efforts

Growing up in Montgomery County, Cpl. Tyrel Flowers-Jackson had several mentors with ties to law enforcement.

From his youth and high school football coaches, to his school resource officer to a cousin who was a trooper, Cpl. Flowers-Jackson said those positive interactions helped guide him on a path to a career with the Maryland State Police. It was also those experiences that he leans on today in his current role as a recruiter with MSP.

"I just love the interaction

with the community," Cpl. Flowers-Jackson said. "Whether it's at a career fair, a community event or speaking in a classroom, I want to do all I can to let people know what a career with the Maryland State Police can offer."

Cpl. Flowers-Jackson said his job is rewarding, but it has become much more challenging in recent years. High profile cases of police misconduct have painted a negative picture for many as it relates to law enforcement in general.

"After 9/11, police were held in such high regard



Cpl. Tyrel Flowers-Jackson and Sgt. Quintina Walker worked to recruit potential candidates to MSP during the Maryland State Fair in 2019.

and there were thousands upon thousands of candidates," he said.

"Now, unfortunately, events that often occur on the other side of the country, are making it difficult for all law enforcement agencies as it pertains to recruiting. There is a much smaller pool of candidates for all of us to try and recruit."

Cpl. Flowers-Jackson said these challenges today don't discourage him; instead they motivate him to work even harder to highlight the great work done every day by the department and to reach

out to find the best candidates for jobs — both sworn and civilian — in the department.

"We need to emphasize community engagement even more," he said. "We focus on the enforcement aspect of the job, and that is definitely important. However, law enforcement as a whole needs to get out into the community. They need to walk the streets, visit the businesses and talk with the people so they can see we want nothing more than to make their communities the best they can be."



MSP is seeking to attract diverse candidates, including at an HBCU Career Day Fair at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania.



# IMPACT UPDATE



Trooper Jerrell Richards moved from New York to follow his dream of joining the Maryland State Police.

## Newest Trooper Seeks To Build On Legacy Of Those Who Came Before Him

Trooper Jerrell Richards knew he wanted to follow his uncle and work in law enforcement.

He started his career as a correctional officer in his native New York City, but knew he wanted to work more in the community he served. He then went online and researched many law enforcement agencies before deciding to apply to the Maryland State Police.

“The troopers in their uniforms looked the part,” said Trooper

Richards, 25, who graduated in December 2022 as a member of Trooper Candidate Class 155. “I then saw videos on YouTube, and I was impressed with the professionalism and I knew I wanted to be a part of that.”

Trooper Richards, who is assigned to the Leonardtown Barrack, joins the department at a time when law enforcement agencies across the country are struggling to recruit and retain qualified and diverse candidates.

He said he believes he can help change that by working to highlight all of the good police do in their communities.

“When I was younger, my uncle encouraged me and I saw how he helped those in our neighborhood,” Trooper Richards said. “My hope is I can do the same here in Maryland and show everyone how rewarding a career being a state trooper can be to the next generation out there.”





# IMPACT UPDATE

## MSP's Office of Equity & Inclusion Creating Work Setting That Offers Sense Of Belonging

While we should celebrate the achievement of the Black community year-round, this dedicated month marks a special moment in which historical events and lessons emphasize the greatness of the African-American community. With diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) becoming more mainstream in workplaces, celebrating Black history to the fullest is essential.

The Office of Equity and Inclusion's (OEI) mission is to ensure MDSP's compliance with the Governor's Code of Fair Employment Practices and various Federal and State laws, policies and procedures prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in all aspects of employment and to create a work environment that reflects equity, inclusiveness and belonging.

MDSP is only as good as its culture—and rebuilding that culture is not only a role for this office, it's every commander, manager and employee's responsibility.

Since 2022, the OEI has worked to make MDSP a more equitable and progressive place to work by learning the perceptual, institutional, and psychological processes that impact the ways employees engage. Beginning with our introduction during new



OEI Director Gayle Tucker

employee orientations; in-person trainings and feedback surveys, presence at Barracks and focus groups; and then offering interventions surrounding unconscious bias and specific strategies to help build a truly aware and inclusive work culture.

The OEI has partnered with Morgan State University to facilitate the [DEI Research Project/Workforce Assessment](#).

- *Diversity Matters...* Diversity is the presence of differences within a given setting. At MDSP, that can mean race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, rank, etc.
- *Equity Matters...* Equity is the process of ensuring that practices and programs are impartial, fair and provide equal possible outcomes. Pursuant to SPP §5

-207(D), OEI reviews all personnel actions to safeguard this process. There is a critical difference between equity *and* equality. In order to help build a more equitable workplace, we have to first identify the gaps, which requires recognizing barriers and advantages, and taking into account that not everybody is starting equally or working at the same pace.

- *Inclusion Matters...* Inclusion is the practice of ensuring that people feel a sense of belonging in the workplace – *it maintains diversity*. This means that every MDSP employee, sworn and civilian, feels supported when it comes to being their authentic selves. Our office understands the Department must maintain its professional standards, but also that an inclusive work environment does not restrict individuals from being themselves.

By combining these three elements—DEI is an ethos that recognizes the value of mixed voices, and considers inclusivity and well-being as vital facets of success.

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*Gail V. Tucker is the Director of the MDSP Office of Equity and Inclusion.*





# IMPACT UPDATE

## PHOTOS: MSP In The Community



**A career as a state trooper is much more than just law enforcement. It is relationship building, it is community engagement and providing the public with positive role models.**



Questions or comments? Email us at [msh.media@maryland.gov](mailto:msh.media@maryland.gov)